



For Immediate Release  
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## **Senate Democrats Fighting to Protect Consumers from High Gas Prices**

***Whitmer: Out-of-control gas prices threaten economic recovery.***

LANSING – In light of the recent surge in gas prices and the approach of the summer travel season, Michigan Senate Democrats are renewing their call to President Bush and Congress to address sky-rocketing oil profits and relieve consumers of the burden unfair gas prices place on family pocket-books.

“Out-of-control gas prices threaten our ability to create jobs and turn around Michigan’s economy,” said Sen. Gretchen Whitmer (D-East Lansing). “We must send a strong message to the federal government that we expect action.”

Senate and House Democrats plan to introduce resolutions tomorrow that memorialize the President and Congress to pass legislation to bring the price of gas down for consumers by capping oil profits and using federal anti-trust laws to prosecute any companies pocketing extra profits in the wake of disasters like Hurricane Katrina. In September of last year, Senate Democrats introduced a resolution (SR 61) to address the rising cost of gas. It was referred to the Senate Transportation Committee and has yet to receive a hearing. Democrats hope this renewed call will garner support from the Republican-controlled Legislature.

According to a recent *ABC News/Washington Post* poll (April 6-9), 70 percent of Americans say they are suffering "financial hardship" from higher gas prices, yet Exxon Mobil Corporation recently eclipsed Wal-Mart as the most profitable company in the world. In fact, *Fortune* magazine reported that Exxon Mobil, the San Antonio, Texas-based oil and gas titan, reported \$36.1 billion in net income last year, making it more profitable than the next four companies of the Fortune 500 combined.

“Michigan consumers are entitled to an effective response to this crisis that inhibits our state’s economic recovery,” said Sen. Mark Schauer (D-Battle Creek). “This is especially important as we approach the summer travel season.”

Manufacturing, agriculture, and tourism economies are disproportionately affected by rising fuel costs. As Michigan’s second-largest industry, tourism accounts for \$17.5 billion in spending each year.

Critics of this resolution claim that gas prices spike every summer due to more stringent fuel requirements and increased travel. However, prices are 64 cents higher than at this time last year, and fourth-quarter oil profits were 48 percent higher compared to one year ago.

“High gas prices are wreaking havoc on family budgets,” said Whitmer. “It’s simply unacceptable to ask people to shoulder the burden of these unfair, exorbitant oil profits.”

Governor Granholm and Democrats have established an online petition to gather signatures of public support. It is available at [www.michigan.gov/lowergasprices](http://www.michigan.gov/lowergasprices) .

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\*\* Editor’s note: A copy of the resolution is available upon request.